1   CLAIMS

2

3   1. An encryption key stored in a PLD comprising:

4   a plurality of key bits for defining an encryption algorithm; and

5   at least one bit for indicating whether more keys will follow.

6

7   2. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating

8   whether more keys will follow comprises:

9   two bits for indicating whether the key is first, middle, last, or only of a set of

10   keys.

11

12 3. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the plurality of key bits comprises 56

13 bits.

14

15 4. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the encryption algorithm comprises the

16 DES algorithm.

17

18 5. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating

19 whether more keys will follow is one bit.

20

21 6. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the ast least one bit for indicating

22 whether more keys will follow specifies the number of additional keys that will

23 follow.

24

25 7. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating

26 whether more keys will follow specifies whether the key is a first key.

27

28 8. The encryption key of Claim 1 wherein the at least one bit for indicating

29 whether more keys will follow specifies whether the key is a last key.